FIRESTORM
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Firestorm! Something Old, Something New

For quite a while now, fans have asked for a new *Firestorm* series starring the fiery-headed superhero who has played an on-again-off-again role in *JLA* in recent years. And this spring, those fans are getting what they asked for... sort of.

Firestorm *is* coming back in a new series.

However, it's *not* the old Firestorm.

This time around, Firestorm is teenager Jason Rusch, a kid whose life is one bad break after another. Jason figures his life can't get any more messed up... until he is mysteriously charged with the powers of Firestorm. Some people might assume that super-powers make everything work out just great... but that's not the way things seem to be working out...

Firestorm, a new ongoing series by *Dan Jolley, ChrisCross*, and *John Dell*, keeps many of the elements of the original series, but it's the significant changes that have already stirred up a little controversy in some circles. So how'd the new series—and the new direction—come about?

"DC editor *Peter Tomasi* called me up one day and said, 'Hey Dan, would you be interested in pitching for a new Firestorm monthly?'" writer *Dan Jolley* told *CSN* "So after my vision cleared and I could breathe again, I said, 'Yes. Yes I would!'

"Pete and I had been working together off and on for several years, and he really liked a certain sort of approach I'd started to take, particularly with the *JSA* Elseworlds projects I did—*The Liberty File* and *The Unholy Three*. So Pete wanted to see if I could employ the same style on *Firestorm*. And here we are!"

As to how the decisions were made to change Firestorm's civilian identity, Jolley explained that "it arose from a series of conversations I had with Pete and *Dan DiDio*. DC had already started kicking around a lot of different concepts before I even came on board, and we continued them. Finally, we settled on an approach that we felt would attract the most readers, while still maintaining the spirit of the original series—and this is it!"

Jolley has already heard from some of the more dedicated fans of the original *Firestorm* run. "Some of the long-time Ron Raymond fans asked me to come and make an appearance on the DC Message Boards, even if I couldn't give them any spoilers about the project... So I went there and started up a dialogue of sorts with them. They know I'm sympathetic, so even if they don't totally support what I'm doing for DC, they've still been very cool to me.

"But I am extremely confident in this series. I think it's going to appeal to a very broad base of readers, and even to a lot of the skeptics, once they actually see what we're doing."

Jolley isn't totally abandoning the original Firestorm concept. He confirms that the cast of the original series *will* play a role in the new Firestorm, "but not a central one—at least not all the time. The new main character, Jason, will definitely have his own supporting cast...but, by nature of the character, he will find himself interacting with people from Ron Raymond's past, also."

The teenager who becomes the newest Firestorm "is a seventeen-year-old Detroit native named Jason Rusch," Jolley said. "He's just graduated high school, and is dying to get to college—not only because his best friend Mick is already there in summer school, but also to get away from his physically disabled father, with whom Jason has a very tense love/hate relationship. This situation, along with a critical error in judgment on Jason's part, has led to a pretty tangled personal life...which gets exponentially more tangled when he gains the abilities of Firestorm." Jason's situation is made worse by financial woes that lead him to agree to do a job for a local criminal—a decision that he begins to regret almost as soon as he makes it.

Everything changes, though, when Jason discovers he has somehow gained amazing powers. "As Firestorm, Jason has the powers of flight, enhanced strength, limited invulnerability, intangibility, the firing of 'fusion blasts' from his hands, and, most notably, the ability to transmute matter from one substance to another," Jolley said.

"But what's most important to the character of Firestorm is that Jason assumes his 'superheroic' identity by physically merging with someone else—two people who suddenly share one body. Jason is in control, but the other person can communicate with him and experiences what he experiences.

"In the original *Firestorm* series, the main characters were high school jock Ronnie Raymond and middle-aged college professor Martin Stein; for most of the run, the two of them were partners, always merging into Firestorm together. But now things have changed—and Jason can become Firestorm by merging with anyone he chooses to. That aspect of the character alone is going to provide us with pretty much limitless story material, as Jason can combine with virtually *anyone* from any walk of life."

Because his personality is different from Ron Raymond's, his attitude as Firestorm is also different. "To begin with, at least, Jason solves a lot of problems in ways he doesn't quite intend to; while his grasp of Firestorm's abilities isn't what you'd call out-of-control, there is definitely a period of adjustment and experimentation involved.

"It is private life, Jason also approaches things quite differently from the way Ronnie would in general; Ronnie, for example, is a gifted athlete, a very good-looking, physically competent guy, whereas Jason, while he's hardly a troll, is often extremely shy and insecure. His friend Mick wouldn't hesitate to characterize Jason as a 'colossal geek.'"

One other change that has led to a great deal of discussion on internet message boards is a seemingly minor one: a few modest changes to Firestorm's costume. In particular, the retirement of the old Firestorm puffy sleeves has led to a great deal of debate among fans of the old series. Was Jolley surprised to learn that there were some who wanted the puffy sleeve look? "Nah, not really, since there are some very loyal, very devoted fans of the Ronnie/Martin incarnation of the character. They really wanted to see the same character they first read, in many cases grew up reading—and I can't blame them for wanting the costume to remain the same. At the same time, though, this isn't the same character—there are quite a few very significant changes in the new series — and the costume has changed accordingly."

In fact, the costume change is actually related to the new Firestorm's abilities—but "exactly how will be revealed as the first year of the story unfolds."

What sort of role the new Firestorm will play in the DC Universe—will he be a major part of the DCU, or will most of his adventures take place in his own neighborhood, so to speak? "That actually remains to be seen," Jolley said. "Right now I'm concentrating on establishing Jason as a character and building up elements that are unique to him—but at the same time, he'll be interacting with the JLA pretty soon, too. He's one of the most powerful characters in the DCU, despite his total inexperience, so it's unlikely that heroes — or villains — will simply let him mind his own business for very long!"

Jason will soon attract the attention of other superheroes in the DC Universe—which is no surprise. "Jason's arrival definitely does *not* go unnoticed," Jolley said. "He gets a couple of visits from a few of the more prominent members of the superhero community pretty early on, which reduce him to slack-jawed, fanboy awe more than once."

Jason soon discovers that superpowers don't make all of his old problems go away, though. In the second issue, he has to confront Stevie Golek, the criminal he agreed to work for prior to Jason's amazing transformation. Well, the new Firestorm may no longer want to become involved in any criminal enterprises—but that doesn't mean that Stevie is willing to simply let him walk away!

Firestorm #1, a $2.50 comic, is scheduled for May 5th release; in addition, Dynamic Forces will offer a limited number of copies signed by *Dan Jolley*, priced at $10.00.

BY CLIFF BIGGERS

Hoping the World Will Watch WorldWatch

Most small publishing imprints launch with titles created by largely unproven talents—but that's not the path that Wild & Wooly Press is taking. Instead, their first book, a superteam project, is produced by a writer who has penned the exploits of the X-Men, the Avengers, and will soon be writing the adventures of the JLA and the and the Man of Steel.

WorldWatch reteams veterans *Tom Derenick* and *Chuck Austen* (who had worked together previously on *Superman #188*) for a series that aims to go beyond the Authority to the next level of superhero adventures. ***WorldWatch*** stars a group of heroes, not unlike the JLA or the Avengers, who have teamed up to combat threats that human authorities aren't capable of dealing with. "Over the years, they become more organized and are sanctioned by the U.N. and given money and equipment needed to operate much like a world level police force," Derenick told *Comic Shop Newsarama's Benjamin Ong Pang Kean*.

"Thing is, superpowered beings tend to be very visible people and corporate America realizes that there's money to be made here in endorsement deals, movies, toyies, etc. Well like anyone else some of the members get greedy and allow their egos to get in the way. They begin to lose sight of why it was they joined WorldWatch in the first place.

"There are those on the team who aren't willing to give up on the group. Warrior Princess, the current leader, and Doc Gulliver have hopes of bring WorldWatch back to its former glory but they need help. Backstabbing and powerplays are making it too difficult for them to do it alone and there's a fear they may eventually lose control of the group. That help comes in the form of a newcomer named Monarch, who hasn't lost sight of what it is to be a hero. He wants to help people because it's the right thing to do and WorldWatch needs someone like him to be a beacon and lead them where they need to go before the organization crumbles at their feet."

How'd Derenick and Austen end up working together on this project? "Initially we were trying to get a modern day ***BlackHawk*** book going over at DC, but it didn't work out.

"Chuck was talking to me about maybe doing a new ***Ascension*** series at Top Cow, but he wasn't sure he wanted to do it and then he brought up ***WorldWatch***, this creator-owned book he wanted to do. He emailed me the first script and I really got into it and we were off and running.

"I've contributed concepts and ideas to the story as well as writing some text pieces to flesh out the world ***WorldWatch*** occupies. Originally Chuck was going to digitally ink me in a way I've never seen done before, but his schedule became too tight and I believe *Norm Rapmund* might be our inker now. Beyond that I'm not sure at the moment.

While Austen is no stranger to superheroes, ***WorldWatch*** is where he gets to portray superheroes the way he's always imagined them to be, without the boundaries of an established universe. "He had an itch to do superheroes in a big soap opera kind of way," Derenick explained. "I know technically superhero comics are a soap opera but trust me, Chuck's taking it to a new level

here as far as clashing egos and backstabbing. He's mixed it up really well, when you read it you can feel the passion he has for these characters. It's some of the best work I've read from him and I think he's done some great stuff.

"It's very different from JLA and the Avengers in that the members of those teams for the most part get along, plus they only have a certain number of members. WorldWatch is a group not unlike a police force. There are many members. My hand is sore from designing them all. The WorldWatch station is populated much like a small city so you can see the difference in that alone. It's JLA on a grand scale but not as friendly.

While Derenick is aware that the UN links make comparisons between ***WorldWatch*** and ***The Authority*** inevitable, he points out that "the nastiness in ***WorldWatch*** is more internalized than ***The Authority***. It's a series of power struggles between members who don't have the same beliefs on which way the group should go. They're much more concerned about their own lives, egos and powerplays than they are about forcing the planet to bend to their will. Trust me, it's not the Authority. You can actually *like* some of these people."

Other than the aforementioned Warrior Princess, Doc Gulliver and Monarch, who else make up the WorldWatch line-up? "Who *isn't* on the team is more like it," Derenick said. "There's a core group we follow in the story, but this is much more of an organization than just a team—so you have an entire community of heroes, some of which you'll never get to see in this first series. The core team is Warrior Princess, Doc Gulliver, Sergeant Mercury (our speedster), Intercessor, Tiger Princess, Fastball, Ectolass, Omnia, Satyr, etc... Let's just say there are a *lot* of them.

Thus far, the Austen-Derenick collaboration has been both enjoyable and productive. "Chuck is one of the most supportive people I've ever worked with. He's given me the freedom to throw out ideas a really put a lot of myself into this project and this has been an excellent working experience for me and I would work with him again in a heartbeat. He's also given me the opportunity to do the things I'm best at—musclebound men and super curvy women."

WorldWatch #1 is scheduled for July release.

BY CLIFF BIGGERS

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by *Comic Shop News* in cooperation with *Matt Brady* and *newsarama.com*

Isn't It Iconic?

Last year, Marvel's plans to launch a line of creator-owned titles under the Epic imprint imploded when the Epic line fizzled—but that doesn't mean that Marvel has abandoned the creator-owned concept. The company has confirmed plans to launch a new imprint, Icon, that will publish books—including creator-owned titles—that take place outside of the Marvel Universe.

Rather than kicking off the imprint with unproven concepts, Icon will premiere this summer with a pair of creator-owned titles with an impressive history: *Brian Bendis & Michael Avon Oeming's* **Powers** and *David Mack's* **Kabuki**.

According to Marvel, Icon "has been created with a mandate to pursue both these creator and licensed projects, while maintaining the highest level of talent and the brands that readers have come to expect from Marvel."

"We had been considering this kind of imprint for a while before talking to Brian and David," Marvel publisher *Dan Buckley* said. "But once we did, everything fell into place. Starting with Brian and David on **Powers** and **Kabuki** really sets the standard for the whole line. We are very excited about this initiative, and are thrilled that Powers and Kabuki are launching it."

"We have always said that we have benefited so much from the generations of comic creators before us who worked so hard to pave the way for creator rights," *Brian Bendis* said. "We have had it so good and we are stunned that we get to help take it to the next level... Marvels first true creator-owned imprint."

"Bravo to Joe, Dan and Gui for making this happen!" *David Mack* added.

"The good news is that nothing about the quality or content of the comics will change," Bendis said in an online posting. "This is fully creator owned publishing initiative, just like Image Central is. We own every page, every staple. All content is ours. Produced exactly like we have for many years at Image... Everything is the same except the company logo. Most people won't even notice the change."

"Our books and all related rights remain completely *ours*," Mack explained. "So **Kabuki** and **Powers** will continue with the exact same format that you are used to... Our books are not part of the Marvel Universe... This is Marvel's first ever step to a fully creator owned launch. Not partially owned situations, but fully and *completely* creator owned. Bendis, Oeming, and I have benefited by the path that Marvel creators before us have made in the direction of creator rights, and we see this as one way to build upon that and create a new milestone in that direction.

"This is a unique opportunity that offers **Kabuki** and **Powers** the best of both worlds. For the readers who have enjoyed our Marvel work, we believe that you will find that our creator owned books such as **Kabuki** and **Powers** are everything that you would hope they are. For the readers who have been with us for years, our books will continue in the content and format that you have loved and supported in the past. The only difference is that they may be easier to find now."

Bendis is optimistic that the change in publishers will attract readers who already follow other Bendis-written titles published by Marvel. "If you have heard of Powers but haven't read it, but you are a fan of my Marvel work—particularly **Daredevil** and **The Pulse**—I truly think you will love **Powers**, and now you have a perfect and totally easy way to get on board the first issue of the new series."

Before creators start sending in their Icon submissions, a word of advice from *David Mack*: "[Icon] is an invite-only imprint that Marvel made for us as a reward for our level of work with them."

This announcement means, of course, that neither of these titles will appear from Image, where both the new **Powers** series and **Kabuki: Alchemy** have been previously solicited (both books are late—and obviously, this change in publishers explains why). Image publisher *Erik Larsen* was sanguine regarding the change, looking at the big picture.

"I think it's terrific that Marvel has come to their senses and finally realized that there is value in letting creators actually create," Larsen told *Comic Shop Newsarama's Matt Brady*. "They've been dependent on forty year-old characters for too long and while they've yelled from the rooftop that they're the 'house of ideas'—it's nice to see the possibility of a few new ideas actually getting out there from this publishing giant.

"As you might expect, I'm less than thrilled that they're cherry picking from Image," Larsen continued. "And I'd be lying if I said I wasn't concerned about the future of Brian, Mike, Todd, Joe and their creations. I can't help but feel this is ultimately an unwise move for these creators—but part of supporting creators' rights is supporting a creator's right to choose. These guys feel it's the thing to do—and it's another day business at Image, they have the freedom to do things like that."

Larsen did point out that "Brian, Mike and David are keeping their trade paperback libraries at Image and we will continue to sell them through our backlist."

Bendis addressed the inherent delays in changing publishers. "We do want to say to our readers and retailers that we are very, very sorry for the necessary resolicitation. We know paperwork is a pain in the ass, as is waiting for comics. We have never in all of our years *ever* had to resolicit. But, as you all know, in life sometimes things don't time out the way you would hope for. The resolicit of our recent relaunches was the best scenario... Though there will be a couple of months delay on the new **Powers**, July will see not one, but *two* brand new issues and a new trade... The new trades will match the Image trades in design and paperstock; so your shelf will look fab."

"We know that this rescheduling can be a hassle for retailers and readers," Mack added. "We had some things come up that did not go as planned, and this time we had to make a resolicitation. We want to apologize to our retailers and readers for the rescheduling, and we will do everything we can to help."

Captain Atom Enriches DC's Reprint Plans

DC has unveiled an impressive list of DC Universe collected editions in their summer 2004 schedule—but for fans of the Silver Age, the highlight, without out a doubt, is the surprise inclusion of an Archives volume reprinting the original *Steve Ditko*-illustrated Captain Atom tales from Charlton's **Space Adventures**.

Captain Atom, introduced in early 1960 in the space-race post-Sputnik era, not only predates Ditko's work on Spider-Man, but it actually predates Marvel's first Silver Age foray into the superhero field with **Fantastic Four #1**, which would not debut until sixteen months afterwards. These tales feature some of the best superhero art of Ditko's career, highlighted by the rich, boldly textured inks that typified the early Silver Age work.

The Captain Atom tales will be included in **Action Hero Archives Volume One**, which will reprint work by Ditko, *Joe Gill, David Kaler, Rocke Mastroserio, and Frank McLaughlin* from the early Silver Age **Space Adventures #33-42** and from **Captain Atom #78-82** (which kick off a second era of Captain Atom adventures produced after Ditko left Marvel). This archive is scheduled for August release.

Other DC collected editions on the summer schedule include:

- **All Star Comics Archives Volume Ten**, reprinting the JSA adventures that originally appeared in **All Star #s 44-48** (July);
- **Batman: Death and the Maidens**, compiling the *Greg Rucka-Klaus Janson* Ra's al-Ghul miniseries, along with a prestavo tale from **Detective #783** (August);
- **Batman: Hush Volume One**, a trade paperback edition of the sold-out-hardcover compiling the first half of the best-selling *Jeph Loeb-Jim-Lee-Scott Williams* story arc, along with six pages unseen in the regular comic run (July);
- **Catwoman: Nine Lives of a Feline Fatale**, a decades-spanning retrospective of Catwoman's comic book career that will appear in conjunction with the *Halle Berry* Catwoman film; this trade will include stories from **Batman #s 1, 197, 210, & 392; Detective #203; Lois Lane #s 70-71; Catwoman #54; Gotham Adventures #4;** and **Catwoman Secret Files #1** (June);
- **Catwoman: The Movie & Other Cat Tales**, which will combine the *Chuck Austen/Tom Derenick* comics adaptation of **Catwoman: The Movie** with tales from **Catwoman** (first series) **#0** and **Catwoman** (second series) **#11**, along with a special *Jim Lee* sketchbook section (July);
- **Crisis on Multiple Earths Volume Three**, reprinting the JLA/JSA crossover adventures from **Justice League of America #s 91-92, 100-102, 107-108,** and **113** (July);
- **The Flash: Blitz**, compiling the story arc by *Geoff Johns, Scott Kolins, Phil Winslade, Doug Hazlewood, Al Gordon, & Weldon Wong* (July);
- **Green Arrow: Archer's Quest**, a trade paperback collecting the *Brad Meltzer-Phil Hester-Ande Parks* story arc from **Green Arrow #s 16-21** (August);
- **Green Lantern/Green Arrow Volume Two**, reprinting the *Denny O'Neil/Neal Adams* stories from **GL/GA #s 85-87 & 89**, along with stories from **Flash #s 217-219** and a never-before-reprinted tale from **Flash #226** (July);
- **Green Lantern: Passing the Torch**, featuring stories from **Green Lantern #s 156 & 158-161** and **Green Lantern Secret Files #2** by *Judd Winick, Dale Eaglesham, Rodney Ramos, and Ariel Olivetti* (August);
- **The Legion: Foundations**, collecting **Legion #s 25-30** (the Superboy story arc), along with **Legion Secret Files 3003** (August);
- **Robin: Unmasked**, collecting the historic "Tim Drake retires as Robin" storyline from **Robin #s 121-125** by *Bill Willingham, Rick Mays, Francisco Rodriguez & Ivan Rodriguez, Aaron Sowd, & Jason Pearson* (August);
- **Superman: Godfall**, a hardcover that collects the six-part *Michael Turner-Joe Kelly-Talent Caldwell-Jason Gorder* adventure from **Action #s 812-813, Adventures of Superman #s 625-656,** and **Superman #s 202-203** (August);
- **Superman: The Greatest Stories Ever Told**, a decades-spanning anthology featuring stories from **Superman** (first series) **#s 1, 65, 156, 247, & 400; Look Magazine; Man of Steel #1; Superman** (second series) **#18;** and **Action Comics #775** (August);
- **Superman Adventures Volume One: Up, Up, and Away!**, a digest-sized collection of *Mark Miller*-written tales from **Superman Adventures #s 16, 19, & 22-24** (August);
- **Superman Adventures Volume Two: The Never Ending Battle**, collecting more *Mark Miller*-written Superman animated-style tales that originally appeared in **Superman Adventures #s 25-29** (August;and
- **Wonder Woman: Down to Earth**, collecting the first story arc by *Greg Rucka, Drew Johnson, & Ray Snyder* from **Wonder Woman #s 195-200** (July).

Humanoids Soon to Be Among Us

A couple of months ago, CSN told you about the DC-Humanoids deal that would bring more affordable editions of Humanoids books to American comic shops. Well, the first books have been announced, and the list includes one of the most popular Humanoids titles.. And not only are the books more affordable, but they're being resized to 7 3/8" x 10 1/5", bringing them more closely in line with traditional US trade paperback sizes while still maintaining the original aspect ratio of the art.

The book sure to generate the most excitement in this initial launch is *The Technopriests*, a 160-page trade paperback featuring the SF tale by *Alexandro Jodorowsky* and *Zoran Janjetov* with a cover by *Fred Beltran*. That title, set for July release, will be followed in August by another Jodorowsky volume, *The Metabarons*, featuring art by *Juan Gimenez*. Both of these were among the most popular English-language volumes during Humanoid's short-lived self-distributed foray into the American comics market.

Other summer releases from DC and Humanoids include:

- **Deicide**, a 112-page trade paperback written by *Carlos Portela* and illustrated by *Das Pastoras* (August);
- **The Hollow Grounds**, a 192-page trade paperback written by Luc Schuiten with art by François Schuiten (August);
- **The Horde**, a 144-page trade paperback written and illustrated by *Baronki* (July); and
- **Townscapes**, a 176-page trade paperback written by *Pierre Christin* and illustrated by *Enki Bilal* (July).

Series Debuts in Proximity of Your Computer

Want to check out Top Cow's new project **Proximity Effect** without any investment at all? Well, you can do just that at www. proximity-effect.com, where the first issue is available even as you read this, and the second issue will follow in late May. That allows you to read about half the book on-line before the trade paperback of the entire series makes its comic shop debut in late June.

"Plotted by Top Cow's *Scott Tucker* and drawn by *Wizard* artist contest winner *David Nakayama*, **Proximity Effect** is the story of Lisa and Caleb," Top Cow's *Joel Elad* explained. "Separated, they are human like everyone else, but together they change the world. This adventure will follow Caleb and Lisa as they try to gain an understanding of the source of their new powers—all the while trying not to be killed by the good guys or enslaved by the bad guys...

"The series will be collected into a trade paperback, filled with additional anthology stories and sporting a new cover by Top Cow founder *Marc Silvestri*, and will hit comic book stores on June 30th.

"Even more exciting, we're partnering with folks like Peavey Guitar and Marshall the make of this series accurate comics. They've already custom-painted Rotor guitars with the **Proximity Effect** characters and premiered it at their big national music show in LA this past January. We have a model who looks exactly like our main female character, who went to this show (and will attend Comic Con in San Diego as well) to promote the series." This partnership, along with other promotions, are designed to expand the marketing reach beyond normal comic book channels, and hopefully will bring those readers into comic shops looking for the book.

"*Proximity Effect* is a whole new way for us to do business and we're excited about the long term possibilities," said *Matt Hawkins*, Top Cow's President. "The relationships being created with marketing partners outside of the traditional business should introduce new blood to Top Cow product and the comic book industry in general. We will be heavily promoting Diamond's comic book locator service as part of this."

The Best & The Brightest: 2004 Eisner Award Nominees

Award season is officially here: the nominees for the 2004 Eisner Awards were just released during ECCC, the first of the major comic book awards, have been made public. This impressive list of potential winners was selected by a panel of judges: retailer *Greg Bennett* (Big Planet Comics), journalist *Marc Arsenault* (senior editor, **Entertainment Weekly**), consultant/editor *Melonee Crawford Chadwick*, museum curator *Andrew Farago* (Cartoon Art Museum, San Francisco), and Diamond Comics product manager *Eloy Sablik*. Ballots will be going out in late April to comics creators, editors, publishers, and retailers. The results will be announced in a gala awards ceremony on the evening of Friday, July 23rd, at the San Diego Convention Center, where Will Eisner will be on hand to give out the trophies.

DC Comics and its imprints have more than twice as many nominations (thirty-five plus shares in five others) as their closest competitor, Dark Horse came in second with fifteen, plus one shared. Marvel received eight nominations; Drawn & Quarterly received six; Pantheon, HarperCollins, iBooks, Top Shelf, and Image each received four nominations.

This year's nominees include:

Best Short Story

- "Death," by *Neil Gaiman & P. Craig Russell*, in **The Sandman: Endless Nights** (Vertigo/ DC)
- "It Was a Dark and Silly Night..." by *Lemony Snicket & Richard Sala*, in **Little Lit: It Was a Dark and Silly Night** (HarperCollins)
- "It Was a Dark and Silly Night," by *Carlos Nine*, in **Little Lit: It Was a Dark and Silly Night** (HarperCollins)
- "Monsieur Jean," by *Philippe Dupuy & Charles Berberian*, in **Drawn & Quarterly 5** (Drawn & Quarterly)
- "Same Difference," by *Derek Kirk Kim*, in **Same Difference and Other Stories** (Small Stories)
- "There Are No Flowers in the Real World," by *David Lapham*, in **The Matrix Comics** (Burlyman Entertainment)

Best Single Issue (or One-Shot)

- **Conan The Legend #0**, by *Kurt Busiek & Cary Nord* (Dark Horse)
- **Finder #30**: "Beware of Dog," by *Carla Speed McNeil* (Lightspeed Press)
- **Giant THB 1.v.2**, by *Paul Pope* (Horse Press)
- **Global Frequency #5**: "Big Sky," by *Warren Ellis & Jon J Muth* (WildStorm/ DC)
- **The Goon #1**, by *Eric Powell* (Dark Horse)

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•***Usagi Yojimbo* #65:** "Usagi and the Tengu," by *Stan Sakai* (Dark Horse)

Best Serialized Story

•***Alias* #22-28:** "The Secret Origin of Jessica Jones" & "Purple," by *Brian Michael Bendis, Michael Gaydos, & Mark Bagley* (Marvel)
•***Daredevil* #46-50:** "Hardcore," by *Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev* (Marvel)
•***Forlorn Funnies* #3-5:** "Mother Come Home," by *Paul Hornschemeier* (Absence of Ink)
•***Gotham Central* #6-10:** "Half a Life," by *Greg Rucka & Michael Lark* (DC)
•***Queen and Country* #13-15:** "Operation Blackwall," by *Greg Rucka & Jason Alexander* (Oni)

Best Continuing Series

•***Alias*, by** *Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Gaydos* (Marvel)
•***Daredevil*, by** *Brian Michael Bendis/Alex Maleev & David Mack* (Marvel)
•***The Goon*, by** *Eric Powell* (Dark Horse)
•***Gotham Central*, by** *Ed Brubaker, Greg Rucka, Michael Lark, Brian Hurtt, & Stefano Gaudiano* (DC)
•***100 Bullets*, by** *Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso* (Vertigo/DC)
•***Queen & Country*, by** *Greg Rucka, Jason Alexander, Carla Speed McNeil, & Mike Hawthorne* (Oni)

Best Limited Series

•***Arrowsmith*, by** *Kurt Busiek, Carlos Pacheco, & Jesús Merino* (WildStorm/DC)
•***Empire*, by** *Mark Waid, Barry Kitson, & James Pascoe* (DC)
•Global Frequency, by *Warren Ellis* and various artists (WildStorm/DC)
•***JSA: The Unholy Three*, by** *Dan Jolley, Tony Harris, & Ray Snyder* (DC)
•***Superman: Red Son*, by** *Mark Millar, Dave Johnson/Andrew Robinson, & Kilian Plunkett/Walden Wong* (DC)
•***Unstable Molecules*, by** *James Sturm & Guy Davis* (Marvel)

Best New Series

•***El Cazador*, by** *Chuck Dixon & Steve Epting* (CrossGen)
•***Invincible*, by** *Robert Kirkman & Cory Walker* (Image)
•***The Losers*, by** *Andy Diggle & Jock* (Vertigo/DC)
•***Plastic Man*, by** *Kyle Baker* (DC)
•***Sleeper*, by** *Ed Brubaker & Sean Phillips* (WildStorm/DC)
•***The Walking Dead*, by** *Robert Kirkman & Tony Moore* (Image)

Best Graphic Album—New

•***Blacksad*, by** *Juan Díaz Canales & Juanjo Guarnido* (Ibooks)
•***Blankets*, by** *Craig Thompson* (Top Shelf)
•***The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo*, by** *Joe Sacco* (Drawn & Quarterly)
•***Persepolis*, by** *Marjane Satrapi* (Pantheon)
•***Yossel, April 19, 1943*, by** *Joe Kubert* (Ibooks)

Best Graphic Album—Reprint

•***Batman Adventures: Dangerous Dames and Demons*, by** *Paul Dini, Bruce Timm*, and others (DC)
•***The Frank Book*, by** *Jim Woodring* (Fantagraphics)
•***Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*, by** *Chester Brown* (Drawn & Quarterly)
•***The P. Craig Russell Library of Opera Adaptations*, vols. 1 & 2, by** *P. Craig Russell* (NBM)
•***Palomar: The Heartbreak Soup Stories*, by** *Gilbert Hernandez* (Fantagraphics)
•***Quimby the Mouse*, by** *Chris Ware* (Fantagraphics)

Best Title for a Younger Audience

•***Astro Boy*, by** *Osamu Tezuka* (Dark Horse)
•***Happy Halloween, Li'l Santa*, by** *Thierry Robin & Lewis Trondheim* (NBM)
•***Little Lit: It Was a Dark and Silly Night*, edited by** *art spiegelman & Francoise Mouly* (HarperCollins)
•***Little Vampire Does Kung Fu!*, by** *Joann Sfar* (Simon & Schuster)
•***Peanutbutter and Jeremy's Best Book Ever!*, by** *James Kochalka* (Alternative)
•***Walt Disney's Uncle Scrooge*, by** various (Gemstone)

Best Humor Publication

•Circling the Drain (***The Collected Dork*, vol. 2),** *by Evan Dorkin* (SLG)
•***Formerly Known as the Justice League*, by** *Keith Giffen, J. M. DeMatteis, Kevin Maguire, & Joe Rubinstein* (DC)
•***The Goon*, by** *Eric Powell* (Dark Horse)
•***The New Baker*, by** *Kyle Baker* (Kyle Baker Publishing)
•***What's Michael* vols. 7 & 8, by** *Makoto Kobayashi* (Dark Horse)

Best Anthology

•***AutobioGraphix*, edited by** *Diana Schutz* (Dark Horse)
•***The Dark Horse Book of Hauntings*, edited by** *Scott Allie* (Dark Horse)
•***Drawn & Quarterly* 5,** edited by *Chris Oliveros* (Drawn & Quarterly)
•***Little Lit: It Was a Dark and Silly Night*, edited by** *art spiegelman & Francoise Mouly* (HarperCollins)
•***Project: Telstar*, edited by** *Chris Pitzer* (AdHouse)
•***The Sandman: Endless Nights*, by** *Neil Gaiman, Dave McKean, P. Craig Russell, Miguelanxo Prado, Barron Storey, Frank Quitely, Glenn Fabry, Milo Manara, & Bill Sienkiewicz*; co-edited by *Karen Berger & Shelly Bond* (Vertigo/DC)

Best Archival Collection/Project

•***Al Capp's Li'l Abner: The Frazetta Years*, by** *Al Capp & Frank Frazetta*, edited by **Denis Kitchen** (Dark Horse)
•***Buddha*, vols. 1 & 2, by** *Osamu Tezuka* (Vertical)
•***Challengers of the Unknown Archives*, vol. 1, by** *Dave Wood & Jack Kirby*, edited by *Dale Crain* (DC)
•***The Chronicles of Conan*, vols. 1 & 2, by** *Roy Thomas & Barry Windsor-Smith*, edited by *Jeremy Barlow* (Dark Horse)
•***Krazy and Ignatz*, 1929–1930, by** *George Herriman*, edited by *Bill Blackbeard* (Fantagraphics)
•***The Spirit Archives*, vol. 12, by** *Will Eisner*, edited by *Dale Crain* (DC)

Best U.S. Edition of Foreign Material

•***Blacksad*, by** *Juan Díaz Canales & Juanjo Guarnido* (Ibooks)
•***Buddha*, vols. 1 & 2, by** *Osamu Tezuka* (Vertical)
•***Chaland Anthology: Freddy Lombard*, vols. 1 & 2, by** *Yves Chaland* (Humanoids)
•***Little Vampire Does Kung Fu!*, by** *Joann Sfar* (Simon & Schuster)
•***Persepolis*, by** *Marjane Satrapi* (Pantheon)

Best Writer

•*Brian Azzarello*, ***100 Bullets*, *Sgt. Rock: Between Hell and Hard Place*** (Vertigo/DC); ***Batman*** (DC)
•*Brian Michael Bendis*, ***Alias*, *Daredevil*, *Ultimate Spider-Man*, *Ultimate X-Men*** (Marvel); ***Powers*** (Image)
•*Ed Brubaker*, ***Catwoman*, *Detective Comics*, *Gotham Central*** (DC); ***Sleeper*** (WildStorm/DC)
•*Warren Ellis*, ***Orbiter*** (Vertigo/DC); ***Global Frequency*, *Red*, *Planetary*, *Planetary/Batman: Night on Earth*** (WildStorm/DC)
•*Alan Moore*, ***The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, *Promethea*, *Smax*, *Tom Strong*, *Tom Strong's Terrific Tales*** (ABC)
•**Greg Rucka**, ***Queen & Country*** (Oni); ***Gotham Central*, *Wonder Woman*** (DC); ***Wolverine*** (Marvel)

Best Writer/Artist

•***Jaime Hernandez*, *Love and Rockets*** (Fantagraphics)
•***Paul Hornschemeier*, *Forlorn Funnies*** (Absence of Ink)
•***Takehiko Inoue*, *Vagabond*** (Viz)
•***Paul Pope*, *Giant THB* 1.v2** (Horse Press)
•***Craig Thompson*, *Blankets*** (Top Shelf)

Best Writer/Artist—Humor

•***Kyle Baker*, *Plastic Man*** (DC); ***The New Baker*** (Kyle Baker Publishing)
•***Tony Millionaire*, *Sock Monkey*** (Dark Horse)
•***Eric Powell*, *The Goon*** (Dark Horse)
•***Joann Sfar*, *Little Vampire Does Kung Fu!*, *Little Vampire Goes to School*** (Simon & Shuster)
•***Jeff Smith*, *Bone*** (Cartoon Books)

Best Penciller/Inker or Penciller/Inker Team

•*John Cassaday*, ***Planetary*, *Planetary/Batman: Night on Earth*** (WildStorm/DC); ***Hellboy Weird Tales*** (Dark Horse)
•***Tan Eng Huat*, *Doom Patrol*, *JLA* #91** (DC)
•***Alex Maleev*, *Daredevil*** (Marvel)
•***Jim Lee/Scott Williams*, *Batman*** (DC)
•***Eduardo Risso*, *100 Bullets*** (Vertigo/DC); ***Batman*** (DC); ***Boy Vampire: The Resurrection*** (SAF)

Best Painter/Multimedia Artist (interior art)

•***Juanjo Guarnido*, *Blacksad*** (Ibooks)
•***Ladronn*, *Hip Flask: Elephantmen*** (Comicraft)
•***Miguelanxo Prado*, "Dream," in *The Sandman: Endless Nights*** (Vertigo/DC)
•***Frank Quitely*, "Destiny," in *The Sandman: Endless Nights*** (Vertigo/DC)
•***Jill Thompson*, "Stray," in *The Dark Horse Book of Hauntings*** (Dark Horse)

Best Coloring

•***Steven Griffin*, *Hawaiian Dick*** (Image)
•***Matt Hollingsworth*, *Catwoman*** (DC)
•***Paul Hornschemeier*, *Forlorn Funnies*** (Absence of Ink)
•***Jason Keith*, *El Cazador*** (CrossGen)
•***Patricia Mulvihill*, *Batman*, *Wonder Woman*** (DC), ***100 Bullets*** (Vertigo/DC)

Best Lettering

•**Todd Klein**, ***Detective Comics*** (DC); ***Fables*, *The Sandman: Endless Nights*** (Vertigo/DC); ***Tom Strong*, *Promethea*** (ABC); ***1602*** (Marvel)
•***Bill Oakley*, *Hawkman*, *JSA*** (DC); ***League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* vol. 2** (ABC); ***Sleeper*** (WildStorm/DC)
•***Dave Sim*, *Cerebus*** (Aardvark-Vanaheim)
•***Richard Starkings*, *Batman*** (DC); ***Planetary*** (WildStorm/DC); ***Hulk: Gray*** (Marvel); ***Hip Flask: Elephantmen*** (Comicraft)

Best Cover Artist

•***James Jean*, *Batgirl*** (DC), ***Fables*** (Vertigo/DC)
•***Dave Johnson*, *Batman* #620–622** (DC); ***100 Bullets*** (Vertigo/DC)
•***Scott McKowen*, *1602*** (Marvel)
•***Joshua Middleton*, *NYX*, *X-Men Unlimited*, *New Mutants*** (Marvel)
•***Sean Phillips*, *Sleeper*** (WildStorm/DC)
•***Brian Wood*, *Global Frequency*** (WildStorm/DC)

Talent Deserving of Wider Recognition

•*Derek Kirk Kim* (writer/artist, ***Same Difference and Other Stories***)
•*Christine Norrie* (***Cheat***)
•*Jeff Parker* (writer/artist, ***The Interman***)
•*Ben Towle* (writer/artist, ***Farewell Georgia***)
•*Brian Wood* (writer, ***The Couriers; Channel Zero: Jennie One, Demo***)

Best Comics-Related Periodical

•***Alter Ego*,** edited by *Roy Thomas* (TwoMorrows)
•***Comic Art*,** edited by *M. Todd Hignite* (Comic Art)
•***Comic Book Artist*,** edited by *Jon B. Cooke* (Top Shelf)
•***The Comics Journal*,** edited by *Gary Groth & Milo George* (Fantagraphics)

Best Comics-Related Book

•***The Acme Novelty Library Datebook*, 1986–1995,** by *Chris Ware* (Drawn & Quarterly)
•***The Art of Hellboy*,** by *Mike Mignola* (Dark Horse)
•***Black Images in the Comics*,** by *Fredrik Strömberg* (Fantagraphics)
•***Mythology: The DC Comics Art of Alex Ross*,** by *Chip Kidd* (Pantheon)
•***Stan Lee and the Rise and Fall of the American Comic Book*,** by *Jordan Raphael & Tom Spurgeon* (Chicago Review Press)

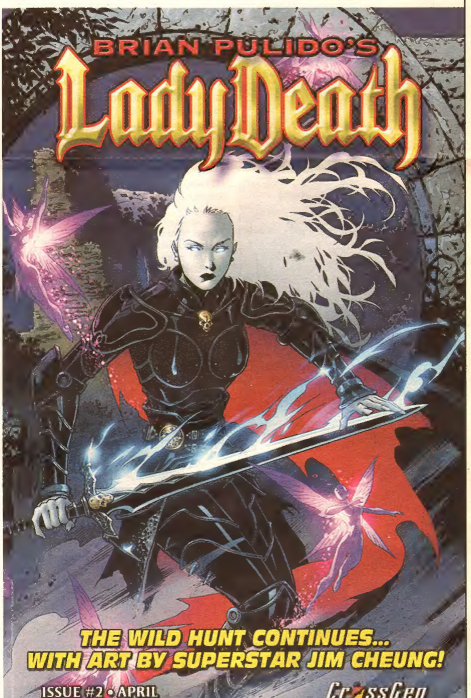
Best Publication Design

•***The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: The Absolute Edition*, vol. 1,** designed by *Todd Klein, Alex Sinclair, & Larry Berry* (ABC)
•***Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*,** designed by *Chester Brown* (Drawn & Quarterly)
•***Mythology: The DC Comics Art of Alex Ross*,** designed by *Chip Kidd* (Pantheon)
•***Project: Telstar*,** designed by *Chris Pitzer* (AdHouse)
•***Quimby the Mouse*,** designed by *Chris Ware* (Fantagraphics)
•***Top Shelf Asks the Big Questions*,** designed by *Brett Warnock* (Top Shelf)

Hall of Fame

Judges' Choices:
Otto Binder
John Stanley

Voters will select four from:
Bill Blackbeard
Wayne Boring
Al Capp
Jules Feiffer
Lou Fine
René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo
Floyd Gottfredson
Graham Ingels
Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima
Don Martin
Jerry Robinson
Gilbert Shelton



Top Two-Dozen for May

Action Comics #815

Chuck Austen (W)‡ Ivan Reis & Marc Campos (A)
(DC MAR040291 $2.50)

Adventures of Superman #628

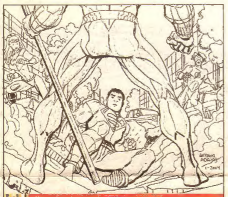
Greg Rucka (W)‡ Matthew Clark & Nelson DeCastro (A)
(DC MAR040292 $2.50)

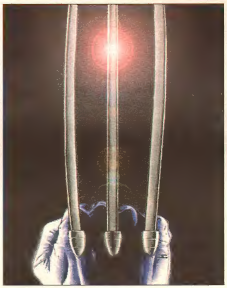
Superman #205

Brian Azzarello (W)‡ Jim Lee & Scott Williams (A)
(DC MAR040293 $2.50; also available signed by Azzarello (MAR042542 $19.99) or by Jim Lee (MAR042541 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?
Superman's next phase continues under the direction of an all-star trio of new creative teams, highlighted by Azzarello and Lee on the flagship title.

Why Should You Care?
New creators, new storylines, new directions—and new glory days for the Man of Steel! Remember the excitement when Loeb and Lee revamped Batman? *Deja vu!*





Astonishing X-Men #1

Joss Whedon (W)‡ John Cassaday (A)
(Marvel MAR041647 $2.99; also available in a signed edition (MAR042512 $19.99))

X-Men #157

Chuck Austen (W)‡ Salvador Larroca (A)
(Marvel MAR041649 $2.25)

Uncanny X-Men #444

Chris Claremont (W)‡ Alan Davis (A)
(Marvel MAR041648 $2.25; also available in a signed edition (MAR042532 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?
Marvel mutants get re-energized with the introduction of a trio of new creative teams, new directions, and a new title.

Why Should You Care?
It's hard to imagine that anything could overshadow the return of the *Chris Claremont-Alan Davis* team to the X-Men—but then again, it's hard to imagine that anyone could and a team like *Joss Whedon* and *John Cassaday!*

Authority: More Kev #1

Garth Ennis (W)‡ Glenn Fabry (A)
(WildStorm/DC MAR040349 $2.95)

What's the Scoop?
The Earth is threatened by an alien armada, and the authority are unavailable—which means that it's up to Corporal Kev Hawkins to keep Terra firma. And that means that the world is in a whole lots o' trouble...

Why Should You Care?
Garth Ennis, maestro of the absurdist power-drama, joins with ace artist *Glenn Fabry* for another tale of the incomparable (or is that incompetent?) Kev. If you liked Ennis' wackier Punisher stuff—well, you ain't seen nothing yet!

Dr. Blink, Super-Hero Shrink #0

John Kovalic (W)‡ Christopher Jones (A)
(Dork Storm MAR042485 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Always figured that someone would have to be a little bit crazy to dress up in spandex and risk his life on a continual basis? Well, Dr. Blink agrees with you—but the difference is, his job is to help them get better!

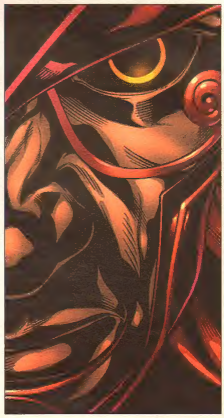
Why Should You Care?
John Kovalic, the master funnyman who pokes fun at comics and gaming fans in each issue of *Dork Tower*, supplies the stories for this offbeat bit of superhero silliness.

Excalibur #1

Chris Claremont (W)‡ Aaron Lopresti (A)
(Marvel MAR041651 $2.99; also available in a signed edition (MAR042533 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?
Professor X embarks on a plan to build a brave new world on the ruins of Genosha—a land where mutants can live without fear of persecution or intimidation. But is the good professor up to the task of nation-building?

Why Should You Care?
Chris Claremont, mutant maestro for thirty years now, reveals the next movement in his magnum opus as he dispatches Charles Xavier on the mission of a lifetime. Don't let this landmark storyline get lost in the glare of *Astonishing X-Men #1*'s spotlight!



Firestorm #1

Dan Jolley (W)‡ ChrisCross & John Dell (A)
(DC MAR040306 $2.50; also available in a signed edition (MAR042552 $10.00))

What's the Scoop?
A troubled teen thought that his life was plenty complicated before.... but it's going to get a whole lot more twisted once he inherits the powers of Firestorm!

Why Should You Care?
Is this the same hero? Doesn't appear to be—but *Dan Jolley* has some surprises in the works that should pique the interest of veteran *Firestorm* fans and thrill those discovering the hero for the first time.

Garth Ennis 303 Preview

Garth Ennis (W)‡ Jacen Burrows (A)
(Avatar MAR042287 $0.99)

What's the Scoop?
Garth Ennis blends ***War Story*** and ***Punisher*** in this series about a the hard-edged leader of a Russian special forces team investigating a downed plane in Afghanistan—a place where no one is your friend and no one can be trusted.

Why Should You Care?
The fan-fave creator best known for his work at Marvel and DC brings his newest series to Avatar—and that means you'd better ask for it, because you're not likely to find big stacks of'em at your local comic shop!

Imperial Dragons #1

Sean Jordan & Les Dorel (W)‡ Vitor Ishimura & Flavio Hoffe (A)
(Devil's Due/DB Pro MAR042470 $2.95)

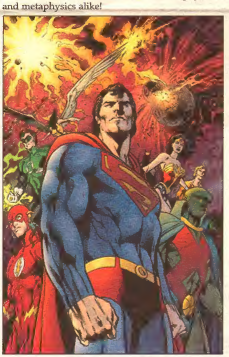
What's the Scoop?
Martial arts meets grand fantasy in this story of thee empires in competition for world domination—and the three army of mystical samurai who stop their struggle from igniting a world war.

Why Should You Care?
The Dabel Brothers—the team responsible for the surprise hit ***The Hedge Knight***—launch an original series with cross-genre appeal.

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA: ANOTHER NAIL #1

Alan Davis (W)! Alan Davis & Mark Farmer (A)
(DC MAR040319 $5.95; also available in a signed edition (MAR042547 $49.99) and a remarked edition (MAR042548 $69.99))

What's the Scoop?
Alan Davis revisits one of the most fascinating Elseworlds ever in this rollicking three-parter that follows the JLA and new recruit Superman in a cosmic adventure that bends the rules of physics and metaphysics alike!



Why Should You Care?
In the first three-parter, *Alan Davis* managed to reinvent virtually the entire DC Universe—so what does he do for an encore? We don't know, but we know it'll be an E-ticket ride!

LIBERTY MEADOWS SOURCE BOOK

Frank Cho (W/A)
(Image MAR041400 $4.95)

What's the Scoop?
Learn all about ***Liberty Meadows***' distinctive cast of characters with this handy-dandy sourcebook that offers background info, trivia, commentary—and most importantly, unpublished art!

Why Should You Care?
Sure, there are lots of comic strip reprints—but ***Liberty Meadows*** is unique in that creator *Frank Cho* continues to create new strips for the "reprint" volumes even though the syndicated

run ended a while back. This book makes it easy for newcomers to get up to speed on the strip and its quirky cast—and veteran Meadowheads already know that this is a must-have!

LIZARD OF OZ GN

Mark Bode (W/A)
(Fantagraphics MAR042567 $12.95)

What's the Scoop?
Cross *L. Frank Baum's* ***Wizard of Oz*** with *Vaughn Bode's* ***Cheech Wizard*** and you get this bizarre book that's part homage, part parody, and pure second-generation Bode weirdness, courtesy of *Vaughn Bode's* son Mark.

Why Should You Care?
Talk about the series' appeal.

NEW X-MEN: ACADEMY X #1

Nunzio DeFilippis & Christina Weir (W)! Randy Green (A)
(Marvel MAR041650 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
School's in session—with a new administration! Professor X is off to Genosha in the pages of ***Excalibur***, so Cyclops and Emma Frost have taken charge of training the next generation of mutant heroes. And they've totally rewritten the lesson plans...

Why Should You Care?
This ***New Mutants*** replacement series ties the x-lings much more closely to the X-Men saga in a

series that traces some of its plot-threads back to *Grant Morrison's* final ***New X-Men*** storyline—and they've even staked out their claim to Morrison's series title!

RAYMOND E FEIST'S THE WOOD BOY #1

Raymond Feist & Sean Jordan (W)! Rob Stotz (A)
(Devil's Due/DB Pro, MAR042473 $2.95)

What's the Scoop?
A young boy discovers the hero within as he pursues those who killed the man who enslaved him and absconded with the dead man's fortune... and his beautiful teenage daughter.

Why Should You Care?
The company that made its mark with their first major fantasy adaptation, ***The Hedge Knight***, is back with an encore series based on a tale in *Raymond Feist's* best-selling Riftwar Saga.

REMAINS #1

Steve Niles (W)! Kieron Dwyer (A)
(IDW MAR042658 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?
Zombies on the prowl in Reno—and two humans gamble their very lives on their ability to outsmart the undead army.

Why Should You Care?
Steve Niles, the master of modern comics horror, turns his attention to the ever-popular walking dead in this fresh take on the zombie motif.

RICHARD DRAGON #1

Chuck Dixon (W)! Scott McDaniel & Andy Owens (A)
(DC MAR040331 $2.50)

What's the Scoop?
Someone's putting together a team of the world's most skilled assassins... and that's not a good thing. Looking to even the odds, Bronze Tiger seeks out Richard Dragon, who thought his martial arts hero days were long behind him—but he's in for a few surprises...

Why Should You Care?
Chuck Dixon & Scott McDaniel present the most hard-hitting, energetic martial arts book on the stands today—this one makes ***Street Fighter*** look like ***Scooby Doo***!

ROBIN #126

Bill Willingham (W)! Damion Scott (A)
(DC MAR040290 $2.25)

What's the Scoop?
Tim Drake's out of costume, and that leaves Batman looking for a new sidekick. So who's going to be the next to don the red-yellow-and-green uniform? Well, we could tell you, but we might have to post a Spoiler warning...

Why Should You Care?
Robin IV reports for duty in this issue—what more reason do you need? Oh, and this Robin's a she...

SEAGUY #1

Grant Morrison (W)! Cameron Stewart (A)
(Vertigo/DC MAR040373 $2.95)

What's the Scoop?
Seaguy lives in a World Without Evil—so what's a would-be hero to do? Embark on a quest with his talking-fish sidekick, that's what—and lead readers on a tour through Grant Morrison's twisted imagination!

Why Should You Care?
Grant Morrison is one of those talents who alternates his major-hit mainstream projects (***JLA***, ***New X-Men***) with his more unpredictable indy-sensi-

bility creations (*The Filth, Invisibles*)—and this is definitely one of the latter. This time out, fun is the name of the game—for Morrison and for the readers.

SECRET WAR BOOK TWO

Brian Michael Bendis (W)¦ Gabriele Dell'Otto (A)

(Marvel MAR041684 $3.99)

What's the Scoop?

The heroes unite to find out the real story behind Nick Fury's discoveries—but what is it that links Marvel's villains, and who's the master planner?

Why Should You Care?

It's been three months since Bendis and Dell'Otto dropped the first tidbits regarding the grand Marvel villain conspiracy theory—and now we all want to know if the truth is out there. (And of course, we also want to see more of that stunning painted art!)

SOJOURN LADY DEATH #1

Chuck Dixon & Brian Pulido (W)¦ George Perez (A)

(CrossGen MAR042409 $2.95)

What's the Scoop?

When Mordath decides it's time to deal with his perpetual problem Arwyn, he reaches across time and space to find another woman capable of confronting her. So who does he pull from his magic hat? None other than Lady Death!

Why Should You Care?

If the crossover storyline isn't enough to pique your interest, then the *George Perez* art—his first illustration work post-*JLA/Avengers*—should do the trick!

SOULFIRE #0

Jeph Loeb (W)¦ Michael Turner & Peter Steigerwald (A)

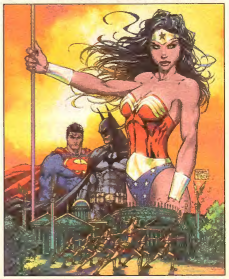
(Aspen MAR042271 $2.50; also available in an alternate cover edition (MAR042521 $6.99) and a signed edition (MAR042522 $29.99))

What's the Scoop?

The creative team responsible for the hit Supergirl reboot in the pages of *Superman/Batman* joins forces again for a new epoch-spanning fantasy series.The star's a scantily-clad pulchritudinous young woman... gee, what are the odds of *that*?

Why Should You Care?

Any project that allows *Michael Turner* the opportunity to draw lovely women is all right with us!



SUPERMAN BATMAN #10

Jeph Loeb (W)¦ Michael Turner (A)

(DC MAR040294 $2.95; also available signed by Jeph Loeb (MAR042545 $24.99) and by Michael Turner (MAR042544 $29.99))

What's the Scoop?

Weren't we just talking about these guys?... Loeb & Turner's Supergirl saga continues, and this time Wonder Woman's involved in training the young Kryptonian... but Darkseid and his Female Furies have some other plans for her.

Why Should You Care?

The first issue of this series sold out in no time and everyone's talking about the new Girl of Steel—it appears that this one is twenty-four Kara gold!

TRIGUN MAXIMUM VOL 1: HERO RETURNS TP

Yasuhiro Nightow (W/A)

(Dark Horse FEB040056 $13.95)

What's the Scoop?

Vash is back in a new tale that picks up a couple of years after the adventures chronicled in his first manga and anime series—but with this many people, both good guys and bad guys, looking for him, you *know* he couldn't stay lost forever...

Why Should You Care?

The amazing success of the first *Trigun* series took everyone by surprise; don't be fooled again!

WITCHBLADE WOLVERINE

Chris Claremont (W)¦ Eric Basaldua (A)

(Image MAR041436 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?

It starts with the wedding of Wolverine and Witchblade, and then it gets *really* weird...

Why Should You Care?

With *Chris Claremont* supplying the story, you know this is the real deal as far as Wolverine is concerned—and once you see the stunning art of *Eric Basaldua*, you'll know why we say this guy is on his way to superstar status.

Check 'Em Out: Books You Should Be Reading

BIRDS OF PREY #66

Gail Simone (W)¦ Michael Golden, Mike Manley, & Alex Toth (A)

(DC FEB040232 $2.50)

This special flashback issue, featuring all-too-seldom-seen art by *Michael Golden* and a cover by comics legend *Alex Toth*, explores Black Canary's past—and introduces the Golden Age Birds of Prey!

GORDON YAMAMOTO & KING OF THE GEEKS TP

GENE YANG (W/A)

(Amaze Ink MAR042174 $9.95)

Far too few of you saw *Gene Yang's* sometimes-silly, sometimes-touching tale of a dimwitted high school student's rite of passage—so Amaze Ink has made sure that you have *no* excuse for missing it now!

GREGORY TREASURY VOL 2 TP

MARC HEMPEL (W/A)

(DC MAR040339 $9.95)

One of comics' most brilliant concepts is available once again in affordable manga-sized compilations. If you haven't sampled the adventures of this institutionalized autistic boy and his rat friend, you don't know what you're missing. Who'd have thought that someone so simple could star in tales so profound?

LAST TRAIN TO DEADSVILLE: A CAL MCDONALD MYSTERY #1

STEVE NILES (W)
KELLEY JONES (A)

(Dark Horse MAR040023 $2.99)

Detective Cal McDonald is back on the case—and this time, he's joined by ace artist *Kelley Jones*, who brings his talents to play on *Steve Niles* newest horror-noir miniseries.

LOUIS: DREAMS NEVER DIE

METAPHROG (W/A)

(Metaphrog HC MAR042695 $39.99; SC MAR042693 $14.99

This distinctive and deceptively simplistic tales by the team known as Metaphrog manage to convey universal truths in a very personal manner. This time around, the words and pictures are accompanied by music from music by Hey and M'm.

SALMON DOUBTS GN

ADAM SACKS (W/A)

(Alternative MAR042170 $14.95)

There's nothing fishy about Adam Sacks' waterborne look at the meaning of life, courtesy of a school of sojourning salmon whose running conversations offer a fishy twist on the road-trip motif.

SAVAGE HENRY: POWERCHORDS #1

MATT HOWARTH (W/A)

(Aeon MAR042163 $2.95)

Matt Howarth's back! *Matt Howarth's* back! If you've never sampled Howarth's understated brilliance, you need to find out what you've been missing—and if you *have* tried him, we've told you all you need know to convince you to pick this one up.

COLLECTED COOL: MAY'S BEST REPRINT VOLUMES

BATMAN/SUPERMAN/WONDER WOMAN: TRINITY HC

(DC MAR040298 $24.95)

Matt Wagner's three-parter sold out of its first in second issues in a matter of days—but now you can get the entire story of the super-trio's first team mission in one handsome volume, complete with a sketchbook section and an intro by *Brad Meltzer*.

DEAD@17 VOL 1 TP *(Viper MAR042861 $14.95)*

Josh Howard rocketed from nowhere to sellout status with this tale of a teen hero who faces death... and loses! All four parts are long since sold out, with some commanding big bucks—but you can get the whole package for a very affordable price.

NEW TEEN TITANS ARCHIVES VOL 2 HC

(DC MAR040334 $49.95; also available in a signed edition (MAR042546 $89.99))

George Perez had just wrapped up his dream project, *JLA/Avengers*—so what better time to present a new collection of the stories that propelled him (and writer *Marv Wolfman*) to superstardom.?

STAR TREK: GOLD KEY COLLECTION VOL 1 TP

(Checker MAR042363 $22.95)

Most of the diehard *Star Trek* fans of today have never seen these Silver *Age Star Trek* tales originally published by Gold Key in the 1960s—but that's about to change, thanks to the Checker gang!

HOT COMMODITIES: MAY'S HOTTEST MERCHANDISING & COLLECTIBLES

BATMAN: HUSH—BATMAN ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct NOV030298 $19.99)

BATMAN: HUSH—HUNTRESS ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct NOV030299 $19.99)

BATMAN: HUSH—JOKER ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct NOV030300 $19.99)

BATMAN: HUSH—POISON IVY ACTION FIGURE

(DC Direct NOV030301 $19.99)

Tim Bruckner brings Jim Lee's Hush art into the third dimension with these meticulously designed action figures that capture every nuance of Lee's art.

CAPTAIN AMERICA MARVEL MILESTONES STATUE

(Diamond Select JAN041970 $175.00)

Eli Livingston captures Simon & Kirby's American icon in his star-spangled glory. Forget Uncle Sam—*this* is the guy who epitomizes America!

CONAN PVC SET: THE FROST GIANT'S DAUGHTER

(Dark Horse JAN040081 $44.95)

Conan, star of books and comics, conquers the toy field with his first PVC set. This one's inspired by the Howard tale "The Frost Giant's Daughter," adapted by Busiek & Nord in *Conan* #2.

WOLVERINE: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST DIORAMA STATUE

(DF MAR042510 $295.00)

The Kucharak Br others recreate one of the most famous moments in X-Men history: *John Byrne's* famous cover for *X-Men #141*, presenting a look at a very grim dystopian future for Logan.

READ ALL ABOUT IT: MUST-HAVE ADDITIONS TO YOUR REFERENCE LIBRARY

ALTER EGO #36 *(TwoMorrows MAR042972 $5.95)*

Jack Kirby's long-time partner *Joe Simon* is spotlighted in the latest issue of this essential-reading magazine for fans of comics history.

BATMAN: THE COMPLETE HISTORY TP

(Chronicle MAR043185 $18.95)

This will-illustrated history also includes a comic book story colored by animator Bruce Timm especially for this book.

CATWOMAN: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE HC

(DK MAR043184 $19.99)

Scott Beatty looks at the comics career of Selina Kyle.

COLLECTED JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR VOL #2

(TwoMorrows MAR042974 $24.95)

Reprints the sold-out issues #10-12 of the must-have magazine for Kirby fans.

SUPERHEROES IN MY PANTS TP

(TwoMorrows MAR042849 $12.95)

Mark Evanier returns with a third volume of old columns and new essays, including pieces on *Julius Schwartz*, bad convention panels, *Curt Swan*, cheap comic fans, un-financed entrepreneurs, stupid mistakes in comics, *Pat Boyette*, and other subjects.

SUPERMAN: THE COMPLETE HISTORY TP

(Chronicle MAR043186 $18.95)

Here's the ultimate biographical history of the comics' original superhero, available in trade paper just in time for this Year of Superman.

WIZARD JIM LEE MILLENNIUM ED LIMITED DELUXE HC

(Wizard MAR042103 $29.99)

This 256-page hardcover spotlights the career of *Jim Lee*—and oodles of art, some unseen, makes it a must-have.

WONDER WOMAN: THE COMPLETE HISTORY TP

(Chronicle MAR043187 $18.95)

Designed by Chip Kidd, this book is filled with a fascinating array of archival comic book art, photographs, and paraphernalia.

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